

Newsletter

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Blissymbolics
Communication
Institute



BLISSYMBOLICS COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE

NEWSLETTER

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ARTICLES

Readers are encouraged to contribute letters and articles in order to share their symbol experiences.

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FROM THE EDITOR

Overview

An interesting public relations idea from Sachi Tamura, late of Victoria, B.C., and now with the BCI in Toronto, gets this Newsletter off to a fine start.

Shelley Miller reports on the use of Blissymbolics with language and speech-handicapped twin boys. Shelley has promised a progress report within the year.

It is not surprising that the words accompanying symbols have been translated into a number of languages for use throughout the world. You may be surprised to learn that it was also necessary in Britain! Trish Bailey and Alison McDonald provide an entertaining discussion on the differences in English usage.

One of our regular contributors is symbol user Paul Marshall. His latest effort is a poem composed in English.

In the last issue, Dr. N. A. Peters and Ms. M. Schwartz discussed the use of Blissymbolics with the hearing-impaired. The conclusion to their article was not available at the time but is included here.

Shirley McNaughton recommends a new book concerning technology and special children.

We conclude with the Symbol Users' Corner with thanks to the students in the special primary class at James Robinson School, Markham, Ontario, their teacher Gwen Mann, and their international symbol correspondents.

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Amerind Workshop

Chedoke-McMaster Hospital is sponsoring a four day workshop on "Amerind - a Gestural Code" with presentor, Dr. Madge Skelly. The workshop will be held from April 1 to April 4, 1981, in Hamilton, Ontario. The fee is \$150 plus textbook and enrollment is limited.

For further information contact:

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Contributions

The original purpose of this Newsletter was to provide an informal exchange of symbol experiences. We attempt to include material of interest to symbol users, parents and professionals. Since we are solely dependent upon you, the subscribers, for contributions, we are anxious to hear from you with opinions, suggestions and criticisms. Research articles, teaching techniques, case studies, news items, anecdotal stories, etc., are all most welcome. Length may vary from a simple paragraph to a few pages and diagrams, illustrations and black and white photographs can be accommodated. We can all benefit from this sharing of experiences.

The next Newsletter will be published in March 1981.

Barbara Rush
Editor

BLISSYMBOLICS WEEK IN VICTORIA, B.C. - 1980

By: Sachi Tamura
BCI, Toronto, Ontario.

In March 1980 the Society for Alternative Communication sponsored Blissymbolics Week in Victoria. For three consecutive years this event has succeeded in spreading information about the use of Blissymbolics on Vancouver Island. The Society has a very active Board of Directors that worked closely with Blissymbolics Programme staff and volunteers to introduce the world of Blissymbolics to the general public. That we have celebrated Blissymbolics Week for three years prompts me to re-cap some of the more successful events.

Celebrations have traditionally started on the Monday with the mayor of Victoria proclaiming it Blissymbolics Week. As well as providing some publicity for the program, this ceremony has provided an excellent opportunity for symbol users to be recognized and congratulated by government officials for their achievements in the area of communication.

The second major event of Blissymbolics Week 1979 was a benefit dinner. One of the very popular restaurants in Victoria agreed to host this event. Attractive posters were displayed throughout the city to advertise the event so both the program and the restaurant were receiving positive publicity. Invitations were sent to all those affiliated with the program as well as local government representatives. The event was both socially enjoyable and financially profitable. Although it was an event that required a great deal of hard work and preparation its success has encouraged us to sponsor it again.

Throughout the week people from the Blissymbolics program appeared on television and cablevision programs. Radio stations and newspapers also carried interviews and stories about the use of Blissymbolics in the local area.

On the Friday and Saturday of the week a display was set up at one of the local shopping malls. The display had been advertised for several weeks ahead of time through flyers and public service announcements. The display included large photographs, posters, a slide-tape presentation, teaching aids and information pamphlets. Symbol instructors were available at the booth to handle inquiries about the use of Blissymbolics. A one-day introduction to Blissymbolics was planned for the following week so that interested people had an opportunity to immediately learn more about the system.

The interest generated from this publicity week has been quite significant. For those of us who are involved with symbols every day it is once again a time to remind ourselves that there is still much work to do in the area of public education.

For those who are interested in sponsoring a similar publicity week, the BCI will soon have an information and suggestion kit available.

BLISS TWINS

By: Shelley Miller
Hamilton, Ontario

Is the saying "Two is better than one" true for symbol users? Here at Chedoke Hospital in Hamilton, we have an opportunity to decide whether that is so.

The Speech Department has been following twin boys for approximately two years. These boys come from a large family (eleven other children) in a farm community outside Hamilton. As young children, they developed their own language and upon their arrival in kindergarten were able to communicate with each other but their speech was unintelligible to everyone else. Both boys were referred for speech therapy. They were seen individually and in an articulation group. Limited progress was observed - the boys were still unintelligible and used very simplistic sentence structure.

At this stage an alternate system of communication was considered as a supplement to their speech, as a facilitator for speech, and to provide a model for improving their sentence structure. Blissymbolics was the chosen method.

The twins have been attending symbol instruction twice a month. It is interesting to have built-in "competition" to see who can find a symbol first or tell the "best" symbol story. After approximately four months, the twins are spontaneously producing symbol sentences in structured situations. However, they continue to refuse to use their symbol boards in normal conversational settings. It has been noted that articulation improves when they say the word as they point to the corresponding symbol. Their teacher reports improved sentence structure for speech since the boys have been working on symbol sentence structure. There is one other symbol user in the classroom and one of the twins has been playing "teacher" by helping this boy find symbols on his board.

It is too early to fully evaluate the contribution made by the use of Blissymbolics in further developing the expressive language of the twins. However, the family and school are encouraged by the results to date and the Bliss program will continue in the next academic year.

ANGLICIZATION

By: Trish Bailey, England
Alison McDonald, Scotland

During the early days of Blissymbolics in the United Kingdom most instructors were so excited by the system that the North Americanisms on the existing charts were largely overlooked and compensated for by the instructors. After a while, we realized that one, British children were constantly being confused by strangers who quite literally read out the word accompanying the symbol, without the automatic adjusting for context and circumstances that most of us do without thinking. Our children were talking "Canadian" not "English"! After studying the symbols published on the stamps by B.C.I., we came up with a few suggestions to anglicize the words printed in North American English. Translation into British English was undertaken by a hand-picked team drawn from the four corners of the British Isles. We had two main aims:- one to avoid confusion and two, to preserve our heritage, the English language.

Under the first heading we rejected "candy" as a word that applies to "stripes" and "floss" but not a sweet. "Cane" is something chairs and baskets are made from, we use a "stick" for walking, (except for a select few who use a rolled umbrella!) "Smart" refers to appearance but the logic of the symbol conveys intensive thought evaluation (clever). A clever British person would go shopping in a shop in a shopping centre, not to a place for keeping things (store) in a paved walking place in Italy (plaza)!

Most of us have good appetites in Britain and would feel a little dismayed at eating nothing but "desserts" after our roast beef. This word is most commonly seen on dainty cartons in the chilled food cabinets, or alternatively in expensive restaurants, but certainly does not describe the typical family "pudding" or "sweet" course.

"Garbage is much too refined for us, we prefer "rubbish". We consume "fizzy drinks" in preference to "soda pop". "Cookie" could be the lady who makes the school dinners, so we eat "biscuits" in our "flats" because only the elite have "apartments".

An example of total confusion can be seen when it is recognised that a Canadian "truck" becomes our "lorry" and a Canadian "wagon" becomes our "truck". But it is possible that when "petrol" becomes too expensive we won't mind wagons full of "gasoline" as gifts!

I hesitate to comment on the next anglicization, but as we do reserve some gentility here we felt we must use the word "trousers". "Pants" are undergarments to which it is not polite to refer! I note that our Scottish representative did not enter into this controversy. It is possible that they will apply for a B.C.I. symbol for kilt after devolution has been agreed!

Finally, the traditional English garden is one thing we all hold dear. We could not allow the B.C.I. to degrade our botanical paradise into a "backyard". Can you imagine changing the song to, "in an English Country Backyard"?

You may find the following useful if ever you pay us a visit:

airplane	becomes	-	aeroplane	sick	becomes	-	sick/ill
fall		-	autumn	gasoline		-	petrol
cookie		-	biscuit	make believe		-	pretend
smart		-	clever	dessert		-	pudding/sweet
fire truck		-	fire engine	garbage		-	rubbish
soda pop		-	fizzy drink	sled		-	sledge
apartment		-	flat	shovel		-	spade
cord/electric wire		-	flex	cane		-	stick
period		-	full stop	candy		-	sweet
backyard		-	garden	ping pong		-	table tennis
eye glasses		-	glasses	stockings/socks		-	tights/socks
field hockey		-	hockey	dumptruck		-	tip up lorry
vacation		-	holiday	pants		-	trousers
institution		-	home/hostel	wagon		-	truck, cart
mail box		-	letter box	sail boat		-	sailing boat
truck		-	lorry	store		-	shop
elevator		-	lift	plaza		-	shopping centre
wading pool		-	paddling pool				

WHY ARE WE HERE?

By: Paul Marshall
Binbrook, Ontario

(This is Paul's third contribution to the Newsletter. See "The Day I Met Mr. Bliss" (Spring 1978) and "The Pros and Cons of Using Blissymbolics" (July 1980). Both previous articles were submitted in Blissymbols. Following is Paul's first "English" contribution. It is the use of Blissymbolics that has enabled Paul's expressive language ability to develop. I can remember Paul as a ten-year old student unable to put together three familiar words in a sentence. Today, after six years of using Blissymbols to communicate, he sits at his typewriter laboriously pecking at the keys with his 600 plus vocabulary symbol board at his side to assist with spelling and word selection. This method results in a peculiar but acceptable syntax. Paul cannot speak and has the awkward gait of the ataxic cerebral palsied, but these are the poetic thoughts of a sensitive and intelligent young man of eighteen years. The poem is reproduced exactly as composed and typed by Paul.Ed)

Sometime I wonder to my self
 Why are we here, living on earth for?
 Do we have a meaning?
 We watch the sun go up and down.
 Do it have a meaning?
 We live our lifes, not knowing other people.
 We come into this world of our,
 Go to school,
 Get a job,
 Have family.
 Grow old
 And go out of our world, who know there have to
 be a after life.
 We live in our shells, not knowing what is out there.
 What is life?
 Why are we here for?
 Is there a higher up?
 Watching after us?
 Sometime I look at my family.
 I say to myself, do I know you.
 It make me wonder, how we got with our family.
 Why are we here for?
 Why do people keep on fighting for?
 Wars, what do we get out them?
 Why can't we get along with our brothers?
 To watch the sea going in and out,
 Is it meaningful?
 To watch seeds grow, it give me a wonderful feeling.
 To watch four time of the year go by.
 How does the weather change, to hot and cold?
 How can it be summer in one place of the world,
 An on the other side we have winter?
 The wonder of day and night.
 What are they?
 What are we here for? Really.

BLISSYMBOLICS AND THE HEARING-IMPAIRED CHILD

By: Nathaniel A. Peters, Ph.D.
 Meryl Schwartz, M.A.

(The following is a conclusion to the article, "Blissymbols: A Possible Adjunct for the Development of Communication and Cognition in the Hearing Impaired", which appeared in the July 1980 Newsletter. It was unavailable at the time of publication).

When using Blissymbolics with the hearing impaired child, it is essential to keep several points in mind:

1. Blissymbolics is not meant to be a communication system by itself, but rather to support other hearing impaired techniques such as language development (oral or total), auditory skills, and speech development.
2. The system may not be appropriate for all hearing impaired children, however, who are experiencing difficulty with language development or who may have unintelligible speech.
3. The board must be geared for the individual child. Vocabulary will depend on the child's needs. In addition to suggestions from parents, classroom teachers and other school personnel a good resource is Ling's Basic Vocabulary and Language Thesaurus for Hearing Impaired Children, 1976. The board must be developed so that a child's additional handicaps are considered, i.e., if a child needs large or raised print, a special board may be needed.
4. To facilitate the acquisition of reading skills, it is essential to expand the child's reading vocabulary by presenting the word without the symbol. The word can be presented without the symbol for both teaching and reading purposes.
5. Language development must be constant. The child's board should be made so that further vocabulary can be added, as well as room provided for those symbols that are being taught.
6. As with other techniques for the hearing impaired, the teacher and parent must work together to develop language skills. Much practice and reinforcement is needed so that the Blissymbol becomes part of the child's language development.

RECOMMENDED READING

By: Shirley McNaughton
BCS, Toronto, Ontario

"Highly recommended reading"

Special Technology for Special Children by E. Paul Goldenberg.

In his book, printed by University Park Press, Baltimore, 1979, Paul Goldenberg discusses the special educational needs of three groups of special children: Those with cerebral palsy; those who are deaf; those who are labelled autistic. For all groups, he explores the learning experiences to be derived from interacting with the computer.

It is an excellent book for those of us who work with Blissymbol users. It is so reassuring to discover a special educator, saying so well, what teachers who care about their students have known for many years - and then applying this sensitive and informed awareness to computer technology.

SYMBOL USERS' CORNER

From: Primary Special Class
Markham, Ontario

As part of our celebration of the International Year of the Child, 1979, we decided to write to symbol users in other parts of the world. We hoped to receive letters with symbols and words showing how much we have in common. We have enjoyed our many visitors from far and near and we have been happy to share this friendship with children in their programs. Many of our friends have not answered our letters as yet. We hope that we will still receive more letters. Why don't you write to us telling about yourself! We'd love to hear from you. Here is the address :

Primary Special Class
c/o Mrs. Gwen Mann
James Robinson School
90 Robinson Street
Markham, Ontario
Canada, L3P 1N9

Now let us introduce ourselves and share three of our replies with you. First, this is our class in action!



Mrs. Mann is the teacher in the Primary Special Class.

△△ [^]⊙ / ⊥↑⊐ □ / [^]1. [^]♡⊕⊕ ⊐↑⊐.

11 children are in the class. Two children use symbols

11 ^x⊙ [^]⊙ □ / ⊐↑⊐. 2 ^x⊙ [^]⊕ ^xΣ

to communicate but all the children use symbols to help them learn

↑⊕ ⊕⊕ ⊕ / ^x⊙ [^]⊕ ^xΣ [^]△ ^x⊥₃ ↓⊐

to read. We read Blissymbol Workbooks. Mrs. Harrington works in the

[^]⊙. ^x⊥₁ [^]⊙. Σ ^x⊐[^]△. △H [^]△. □. /

class too. She is Kari's Mom. Kari has used symbols

⊐↑⊐ +. △₃ [^]⊙ ⊙K₊ △. ⊙K [^]⊕ ^xΣ

to talk for a long time. She has written a story about her

[^]⊙ >> \ [^]H ⊕. △₃ \ \ ⊐⊙ > △₃+

life. Maybe you will read it one day.

⊙. ⊙? ⊥₂ [^]⊙. 1 1 ⊕.

Billy likes tractors. He talks with symbols. He comes to

⊙B [^]♡+! ^x⊕[^]△. △₃ [^]⊙ + ^xΣ. △₃ [^]→ | > |

school in a taxi. He sings in Room 1.

△↑⊐ □. \ ^x⊕⊕. △₃ [^]⊙⊕. □. ⊐₁.

He works in Room 2. He plays in the gym.

$\lambda_3 \hat{\wedge} \square \sqsupset 2. \lambda_3 \hat{\wedge} \heartsuit \uparrow \square / \sqsupset \wedge 4.$

Robbie talks with symbols and with his hands. He likes

$\lambda_R \hat{\circ} + \sum + + \lambda_{3+} \downarrow. \lambda_3 \heartsuit +!$

to play sports -- soccer and hockey. Bobby comes

$\hat{\wedge} \heartsuit \uparrow \hat{x} 4 - \wedge \ominus \triangle _ \textcircled{B} + \wedge \backslash \omega \textcircled{B}. \lambda_B \rightarrow |$

to school on the bus. He likes to ride his

$> | \square \uparrow \square \searrow / \textcircled{\times \times \times} \lambda_3 \heartsuit +! \xrightarrow{\textcircled{B}} \lambda_{3+}$

bike and go fishing.

$2 \otimes + \downarrow \alpha.$

Marco goes to the cottage. He likes to ride in the

$\lambda_M \hat{\triangle} > | / \square \perp. \lambda_3 \heartsuit +! \xrightarrow{\textcircled{B}} \square /$

boat. He comes to school in a van.

$\cup, \lambda_3 \rightarrow | > | \square \uparrow \square \square \backslash \textcircled{\times \times \times} \textcircled{B}.$

Michelle is a new girl in our class. She

$\lambda_M \hat{\oplus} \backslash \oplus \rightarrow \lambda \square \perp_1 + \sqsupset \uparrow \square. \triangle 3$

likes this school because she is learning.

$\heartsuit +! / \square \uparrow \square \triangleright ? \triangle 3 \downarrow \square.$

Tommy likes to watch T.V. and play on his

$\lambda_T \heartsuit +! \textcircled{\circ}! \square \odot \textcircled{B} + \hat{\wedge} \heartsuit \uparrow \searrow \lambda_{3+}$

bike. He goes home in the taxi with Billy.

2⊗. λ_3 \triangle^{\wedge} \triangle \heartsuit \square $/$ \otimes \otimes \otimes $++$ λ_B .

Darren and Ryan are friends at school. They like

λ_D $+$ λ_R \oplus \perp^x \heartsuit $+$ $!$ $>$ \triangle \uparrow \cap λ_3 \heartsuit $+$ $!$

to hear stories and have a cookie.

$\hat{\gamma}$ \square^x \circ $+$ \pm^{\wedge} \backslash \circ \emptyset \uparrow .

Chris comes to school on the bus. Chris works in

λ_C \rightarrow $|$ $>$ $|$ \triangle \uparrow \cap \searrow $/$ \otimes \otimes \otimes λ_C $\hat{\wedge}$ \square

his books and reads the Tip book.

λ_{3+} \square^x $+$ \odot^{\wedge} \square $/$ \mathbb{M} TIP \square .

Jody likes to work at school. She writes in her

λ_J \heartsuit $+$ $!$ $\hat{\wedge}$ $>$ \triangle \uparrow \cap \triangle_3 \backslash \square \triangle_{3+}

storybook and works in her workbooks.

\square° \square $+$ $\hat{\wedge}$ \square \triangle_{3+} \square^x $\hat{\wedge}$.

Blaine has many friends. His favourite thing is to draw.

λ_B \pm^{\wedge} \times^v \perp^x \heartsuit $+$ $!$ λ_{3+} \otimes^v $1.$ \square \oplus \backslash \square \odot°

He likes Math and Reading too.

λ_3 \heartsuit $+$ $!$ \triangle $+$ \odot^{\wedge} \square $+$.

Hello



(from England)

13

I (my) name Russell.

\perp_1 ~~R~~ RUSSELL.

I am 16.

\perp_1 $\hat{\Phi}$ 16.

I have father and mother and sister Lisa and

\perp_1 \pm \wedge + \wedge + $\hat{\Delta}_2$ LISA +

brother Douglas.

$\hat{\Delta}_2$ DOUGLAS.

I like symbols and football.

\perp_1 $\hat{\heartsuit}+!$ \sum^x + $\wedge \ominus \triangle_{\textcircled{B}}$

I like teacher Miss Rawlings.

\perp_1 $\hat{\heartsuit}+!$ $\perp \updownarrow \square$ MISS RAWLINGS.

I like Maths.

\perp_1 $\hat{\heartsuit}+!$ MATHS

My friend is Nicky. He swims in pool

\perp_1+ $\perp \hat{\heartsuit}+!$ $\hat{\Phi}$ NICKY. \wedge_3 $\hat{\uparrow} \sim$ \square $\square, \uparrow \sim$

and I went to Liverpool to see football game.

+ \perp_1 $\hat{\triangle}$ $>!$ LIVERPOOL $\hat{\odot}$ $\wedge \ominus \triangle_{\textcircled{B}}$ $\rightarrow \hat{\heartsuit} \uparrow_{\textcircled{B}}$

(from United States)

Hello.

○ → ←

I am 11. I have blue eyes. I am happy.

⊥₁ ⊕ 11. ⊥₁ ± ⊖ — ⊙^x. ⊥₁ ⊕ ♥↑.

Thanks for the letters.

♥ ↑ >> / ✉^x.

I come to school on the bus. I love

⊥₁ →[^] | > | △ ↑ ▭ < / ⊗ ⊗. ⊥₁ ♥ →[^]

Math. Miss Eckstein is my teacher.

MATH. MISS ECKSTEIN ⊕ ⊥₁+ ⊥ ↑ ▭.

I like T.V. My sister and I go to

⊥₁ ♥ + ! □ ⊙ ⊃ ⚡. ⊥₁+ △₂ + ⊥₁ △ > |

Brownies. We work on art (at) Brownies.

BROWNIES. ⊥₁ ↑^x ↑[^] < △ ♥ BROWNIES.

I love my mother and father.

⊥₁ ♥ →[^] ⊥₁+ △ + △.

Good-bye.

○ ← →

Nancy Cashdollar

(from Sweden)

Hello.

O → ←

My name is Håkan.

 $\perp 1 + \text{HÅKAN.}$

I am 10 years old. I like hockey.

 $\perp 1 \text{ } 10 \text{ } \text{HOCKEY.}$

I like Toronto Maple Leafs with Borje

 $\perp 1 \text{ TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS + BÖRJE}$

Salming from Sweden.

SALMING > SWEDEN.

Tuesday night we play bandy. I am the seventh.

 $\Omega 3 \text{ } \perp 1 \text{ } \text{BANDY.}$

Bandy is similar to hockey. I am in Sweden.

 $\text{BANDY} \text{ } \text{SWEDEN.}$

Good-bye

O ← →

Håkan

(B) indicates - 1) a symbol which differs from the C. K. Bliss version either in symbol form or accompanying wording, or - 2) a new BCI symbol authorized in the absence of requested comment from C. K. Bliss.

Material from symbol users is reproduced essentially as submitted in order to reflect individual creativity and different styles for expression or instruction. Neither symbols nor usage are to be regarded as models for expression or instruction.

The symbol composition and drawing have been updated to conform to Blissymbols for Use.

Although the combine strategy is frequently employed to arrive at new symbol expressions, the personal symbol creation is often not enclosed between combine indicators as required by BCI practice.

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